

1 April 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

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"2. Meeting with Participants of Advanced Operations Course:

As part of my 1 April session with the participants in the Advanced Operations Course a number of points were made by the participants. One subject which drew opposing reactions was whether the Agency should consciously do something about its image and challenges thereto or should maintain the more traditional no comment posture. I noted my belief that there appears to be a slight move in the direction of presenting at least factual information designed to correct the common misimpressions.

Of clear significance was the discussion concerning employee attitudes and mores as related to the Agency and domestic problems. I had mentioned the Youth Forum and attitudes reflected in one panel session plus the current Agency policy tolerance which does not automatically disqualify candidates for employment who may have experimented once or twice with marijuana. I was "picked up" on both points. On marijuana one "student" expressed botherment that the Agency would in its recruitment policies and practices condone illegal actions by would-be employees. On the other subject I was faced with the views of a number of the course participants strongly against the existence of employees who are challenging the morality and relevance of the Agency. The AOC students had apparently been exposed at [] to the existence of five Operations Familiarizations Course students who were not satisfied that they could continue as Agency employees on the Agency morality issue and who were meeting with an [] staffer tonight to air their views. I distinguished the views and attitudes expressed at the Youth Forum Panel from not being able to condone the morality of CIA as an institution. I also distinguished this latter subject from the questioning on the part of very many loyal Americans of the war and our involvement in Southeast Asia.

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After the session I talked to Mr. Cunningham to advise him of this part of the discussion and of the worries expressed by these CS officers that the existence of these questioning attitudes reflected adversely on our recruiting and screening mechanics, that it reflected individuals who might be successfully targeted by other intelligence services and potential and perhaps actual security worries for the CS officers themselves on an exposure theory. I "worried" to Mr. Cunningham that these AOC students could put their worries into a broad CS arena with obvious potential repercussions for us. Mr. Cunningham who had already heard of this discussion was trying to determine from Mr. [] the who and where of this evening's discussion. He, however, expressed surprise that people would be surprised that the sentiments did exist. He indicated awareness over a period of years of numbers of occasions on which the same ideas came out. He also expressed the belief that the DD/P himself would not be as surprised or tender as the AOC students. And, he further hoped that we would tend to go by ears so that we would at least be aware of attitudes and sentiments rather than attempting to shut off or bottle up any expression or discussion."

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DD/S:JWC:lhc (19 July 1971)

Distribution:

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